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ABSTRACT

Rapidly changing organizational systems and individual demands, as outlined by Alvin Toffler in "Future Shock," call for a unique flexibility in change strategies. Although theatre, as reflected in the degree of support by the national budget, is not considered a high priority item, it can provide a valuable social function. With the increasing use of ad hoc organizations to deal with the problems of accelerating change, individuals must learn to function within changing systems in both their individual lives and in organizations. By its very nature, the theatre production is an ad hoc organization which demands new socializations, a state of continuous learning, and synergenic problem solving skills. As such, it can provide an experience capable of increasing individual flexibility. An experimental design involving the testing of students before and after involvement in directing and theatre productions on K.W. Schaie's Test of Behavioral Rigidity reveals increased personal flexibility after theatre experiences. The social utility of theatre can be demonstrated, therefore, in an objective manner. (KS)

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A POSITION PAPER:

A PARADIGM FOR A FUTURE OF CHANGE IN ORGANIZATIONS: A NEW POTENTIAL FOR EDUCATIONAL THEATRE

BY

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New perspectives are the order of the day. Images of Alvin Toffler's FUTURE SHOCK surface constantly as people try to sort out what is happening and where we are going. As Toffler suggests, change is occurring in so many dimensions of life that change becomes turmoil. The turmoil of change can cause future shock, stress overloads, unless a new perspective makes change acceptable.

This is a position paper dealing with the growing intensity of change, and the need for a new perspective. My special concern is primarily educational theatre. The growing pressure in education from the need for justification of programs, the demand for accountability, and the implementation of decision-making formulas, has forced a search for a new perspective.

Three separate area converge ("interface" to use modern jargon) in the dilemma of educational theatre's justification. First, the future as suggested by Alvin Toffler is forcing us to consider goals and priorities. National priorities do suggest the direction of the nation. Where theatre is in the national scheme-of-things determines our chances for survival. Secondly, organization must receive our attention as the future forcibly imposes man's interdependence on the entire world. As an amateur in the area of organization, I believe that an organizational perspective of the theatre offers some unique possibilities. Thirdly, in a future of rapidly changing organizations, the individual who must be able to function in rapidly changing organizational environments needs special attention. Future organizations will need individuals who are prepared to function in organizations and in change. Educational theatre can have some unique contributions to make to the future organizations.

Alvin Toffler, in FUTURE SHOCK, speaks of the Specialist's defensive strategy:

> "The specialist doesn't block out all novel ideas or information. Instead he energetically attempts to keep pace with change -- but only in a specific narrow sector of life." (1)

The result of the specialist's view is that:

> "He may awake one morning to find his specialty obsolete or transformed beyond recognition by events exploding outside his field of vision." (2)

Theatre is a specialty. In most cases, theatre demands virtually all our attention just to keep theatre happening. Events exploding outside our vision may be bracketting us, as army artillery brackets around a target area before blasting the objective out of existence. The position of educational theatre is completely exposed.

Like all of the humanities, we have built our justifications out of paper. Many humanistic words have been written about theatre and its values. Basic to virtually all humanistic justification is the 'castor oil' theory -- take it, it's good for you. In our creative innocence, we assume that the policy-makers will understand. The policy-makers do not understand our tracts. Explanations without verification hold little validity. Policy-makers, juggling an impossible number of demands on national priorities, have to have some concrete means of establishing priorities. One means of establishing priorities with some sort of objective judgement is the computer-based PPBS -- Planning-Programming-Budget-System. That system demands quantifiable factoring. A second less objective means of establishing priorities develops from political sources -- lobbying and pressure. Government agency specialists and national association representatives do not build the pressure that a grassroots movement does. We can no longer let George, or Martha, represent theatre.

Each of us must contact our legislators at home. We must speak in a language which legislators can understand. Cynicism or naivete won't do. Theatre must have a definite place in the national priorities to survive.

The priority status of any national concern is established by its social utility. The arts and the humanities do have a priority, and theatre has a priority. That priority is reflected in the national budget. The National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities have estimated budgets for 1976 totalling about eighty million ($80 million) each. That sounds like a lot of national interest, until you remember that the total estimated national budget for 1976 is $349.4 billion. These figures tell us that the arts and humanities each have a national priority ranking of .02% -- that's two one-hundredth's of one percent. Theatre programs, mostly professional theatre, receive 7.4% of the National Endowment for the Arts' budget. That's .002% (two one-thousandth's of one percent) of the national priority and interest.

A potential source of funding for educational theatre is through the Arts and Humanities staff of the U.S. Office of Education. The Office of Education's estimated budget is $6.5 billion out of the total $349.4 billion budget. Education funding is available through the budgets of other agencies raising the total national commitment to education to a proposed $7.4 billion in 1976. The Arts and Humanities staff in the U.S. Office of Education has not yet been able to determine how much federal education money is actually going into the arts and humanities from their agency. (There is a direct allottment of $100,000 to each state for the arts and humanities in education. There is $750,000 earmarked for arts

and humanities special projects.) The National Institute of Education handles all research and development funds for the U.S. Office of Education; but the National ~~Institute~~ Institute of Education has no funds -- no priority -- for research and development of the arts and humanities in education. These budget figures suggest that the arts and the humanities rank low on the priority scale of national social utility.

We can shout, we can scream. We can lay down and kick our feet. We won't raise a bump in the national priority. If we do not raise that priority, all the humanistic justifications in the world may not save theatre in education if present trends continue.

Economic pressures and the demand for change are pressing hard on the educational system. We must begin to formulate some concrete information which is meaningful to policy-makers. We must demonstrate our social utility, or one morning we shall wake up extinct.

Finding the language of economics and politics will be extremely difficult for those of us in the arts and the humanities. We have allowed businessmen, politicians and bureaucrats to come to us to learn our viewpoint. These persons have had to learn our humanistic language. Most of us have not even attempted to learn the language of business and politics. That innocent snobbery, that hubris, may spell tragedy for theatre in education unless we change our perspective.

By adopting a perspective common to business and government, we may be able to communicate and share. We may even reveal a strong social justification for theatre's survival.

The most common feature between theatre and the worlds of business

and government is the fact that we function in organizations. The perspective I am proposing to take is organizational.

Reading a number of books on organization and management, as well as a number of articles in these fields, I discovered that some theatre's organizational problems are the same problems as management experiences in business and government. In some cases, I discovered that the mere fact that a large and complex organization gets anything done verges on the incredible. In other cases, I discovered there are some management problems which theatre solves with hardly a second thought.

Assuming an organizational perspective requires a view of the organization as a whole. We need to study what makes the organization of the theatre work.

By its very nature, organization is based on cultural assumptions about "the ways things should be" -- the ways people join together to do something. Cultural assumptions are our reality: consequently, they are extremely difficult to identify and examine. Because of our experience and knowledge about theatre organization, we assume that our organization will work. Because our organization's business is magical -- "making things appear to be happening for the first time," the organization is hidden. I have not yet been able to find much material on theatre as an organization in over a year of searching. A book reporting a symposium on "The Creative Organization" (3) fails to mention theatre. Perhaps we are doing our magic too well. Organizational specialists assume the arts can not contribute anything to their "real" world. Such an assumption may be a mistake.

Organizations everywhere are changing. They must change in order to do today's work. Peter F. Drucker, a managment authority, observes, "Organizations are always in danger of being overwhelmed by yesterday's tasks and being rendered sterile by them." (4) Managers in business, government and many social agencies are furiously changing parts of the structure in an effort to make organization work. Musical offices, or office roulette, seem to be the order of the day. This condition is reflected by a man with the stature of Robert M. Hutchins publishing an article entitled, "All Our Institutions are in Disarray." (5) If organizations do not work, everyone is in trouble.

Changing the structural pieces of organizations may not be the answer. The current paradigm of organization as a bureaucratic system remains. Toffler, in FUTURE SHOCK, sets out the three basic characteristics of bureaucracy:

> "First in this particular system of organization, the individual has traditionally occupied a sharply defined slot in a division of labor. Second, he fit into a vertical hierarcy, a chain of command running from the boss down the lowliest menial. Third, his organizational relationships ... tended toward permanence." (6)

That permanence inherent in bureaucratic organization is incapable of functioning in a rapidly changing environment.

Toffler tells us that the future is demanding organizational ad hocacy. The bureaucratic organization is designed with all problems anticipated. The system is set to handle problems in a routine manner. However, exponential change in all phases of life causes problems in dimensions not anticipated by the bureaucratic structures. Temporary organizations -- task forces, planning groups, action groups -- are springing up to deal with specific problems. When the group's purpose

is achieved, it dissolves. Organizations and individuals in such change conditions are threatened with future shock.

What may be required is a new paradigm of human organization. A paradigm establishes a new perspective, a new view point. A paradigm, in a scientific sense, can be "an object for further articulation and specification under new or more stringent conditions..." (7)
Theatre can offer an operational paradigm of human organization.

As a paradigm for future organizations, the theatre may be able to offer dimensions of ad hocacy not possible in other organizations. The theatre is essentially an ad hoc producing organization. In economic terms, it is a client-centered organization performing a service on a schedule. As an "open-system" organization, most theatre adapt naturally to ther external environmental pressures. Each production, in most theatre, demands adaptions in organizational structures, tasks, and personnel.

Theatre is essentially a synergetic organization: that is, theatre produces through cooperative force. Synergy in the theatre forms and dissolves with every production. If we could identify the source of theatre's synergy in ad hocacy and bottle it, theatre should have justification for more than mere existence.

With the increasing use of ad hoc organizations to deal with the unique problems caused by accelerating change, individuals must learn function in change in their own lives and within changing organizations. Warren Bennis, one of the foremost authorities on organizations and change, projected that there are six requirement or objectives for training the individual,

1. Training for change...we should be trained in an attitude toward inquiry and novelty rather than the particular content of a job...

2. Systems Counseling...In the new organizations, where roles will be constantly changing and certainly ambiguous, where change in one sub-system will clearly affect other sub-systems, where diverse and multi-national activities have to be co-ordinated and integrated, where individuals engage simultaneously in multiple roles and group memberships (and role conflict is endemic), a systems viewpoint must be developed...

3. Changing Motivations...Training needs for attitudes about continuing education so that it is not considered a "retread" or a "repair factory," but a natural and inescapable aspect of work...

4. Socialization of Adults...(adults in changing organizations must form new socializations, new roles, readily)...Most certainly, we are afraid of socialization for adults, as if it implies the danger of a delayed childhood disease, like whooping cough...

5. Developing problem-solving teams...One of the most difficult challenges for the training and development manager will be the task of promoting conditions for effective collaboration or building synergetic teams...

6. Developing supra-organizational goals and commitments... What worries me about organization of the future, of specialized professionals and an international executive staff, is that their professional and regional outlook brings along with it only a relative truth and a distortion of reality...(8)

Three of Bennis' requirements deal with the basic attitudes of an individual capable of functioning in change. The individual must have (1) an attitude toward inquiry and novelty, (2) an attitude toward continuing learning, and (3) a capacity to form new socializations. The other three characteristics of Bennis' individual of the future -- (1) a systems perspective, (2) functioning in problem-solving teams, and (3) developing supra-organizational goals and commitments -- are directly related to the individual functioning in organizations.

Experience forms a person's expectations and perceptions. Common sense suggests that if a person's organizational experience is limited to a large number of permanent bureaucratic organizations, that person's cultural assumptions will be based on hierarchy, division of labor, and permanence. Rigidity of these organizational assumptions can set individuals on a course toward "future shock" in an age of ad hocacy.

If the forecasts of Toffler and Bennis are valid, what is needed is a method to train individuals with the capacities to function in future organizations.

I believe we have such an experience-based education organization. We call it "theatre".

Consider the kind of organizational experience in the theatre:

1. Theatre as an ad hoc organization forms around the production of a play. The variety of productions depends upon the theatre's capacities to work with a variety of theatrical styles or forms. Each production, tends to develop some variation in or organization. Only in a very large theatre program would there be a tendency to allow, or encourage, specialities for individuals.

2. In most educational theatre, every production demands new socializations. Various productions can demand various leadership styles of the director. Production demands usually mean that tasks change. The flow of personnel through the theatre during the various productions does necessitate some change in relationships. Actors change roles. Many people with some theatre experience end up in multiple tasks in one production, or in several concurrent productions.

3. Each production demands a state of continuous learning in the theatre. New skills must be learned, old skills must be improved or extended. New information -- artistic, historical, political, social, economic, psychological -- must be absorbed Different viewpoints must be worked out and established. New materials are often explored and used.

4. Each production is, in fact, a synergetic problem-solving experience. Synergetic refers to an organizational "capacity for turning selfish or unselfish individual motives to the benefit of all..." (9) Theatre happens because of its natural synergy. Each production is a problem, and team effort is required if theatre is to happen. How many people who are involved in theatre for even two or three productions

walk away without a somewhat better capacity to solve problems?

5. Developing supra-organizational goals and commitments is another phenomenon of theatre. The supra-organizational goal is "theatre". Few individuals are involved in theatre for long remain rigid in their commitment to one theatre. There is much room for conjecture, and study, as to how and why "theatre" becomes supra-organizational.

6. A "systems" perspective within the organization of theatre should be most natural. Experience with several of the theatre's systems, or sub-systems, should quickly identify the nature of the relationship between systems and sub-systems. Developing a systems concept in theatre might even increase the speed with which our multiple activities are learned.

From these general observations about the ad hocacy of theatre, questions form (1) does theatre really have an effect on the individual? (2) What kind of impact does theatre have on its participants?

These questions led me to the Co-ordinator of the Psychology Department of Fairmont State College. My hypothesis is that theatre experience does affect people's ability to deal with change. Dr. Robert Bauer developed a pilot program to test this hypothesis. A pre-test and post-test was arranged using my directing class as the experimental group, with classes in psychology and mathematics as the control groups.

In the test battery used for this project, the basic test was the Test of Behavioral Rigidity developed by Dr. K. Warner Schaie at the University of Nebraska. The Test of Behavioral Rigidity is intended to identify individual rigidity on a scale of very flexible to very rigid. Rigidity is defined as, "a tendency to perserverate and resist conceptual change, to resist the acquisition of new patterns of behavior, and to refuse to relinquish old and established patterns." (10)

The students in the control groups and the experimental group of theatre students began the Spring term at about the same level on the flexibility-rigidity scale. The theatre students were involved in the

directing class and in several production experiences. In the post-test the mathematics and psychology students tested out as becoming more rigid. The experimental group of theatre students became more flexible. While our sampling in the theatre class turned out to be very low, due to scheduling problems and some resistance, there is stong suggestion that my hypothesis is valid.

There is a need for an extensive testing program to find out whether these findings continue to hold validity. Such data could be the basis for establishing a sensible criteria in accountability. Considering the viewpoint of Alice Rivlin, an expert in planning and policy,

> "...a second set of objectives in education might loosely be called the 'ability to cope'. ...an important objective of education is the development of self-confidence, a positive self-image, and the ability to deal with new situations. The schools have often failed here. ..." (11)

and the increasing potential of future shock, educational leaders and policy-makers would be wise in reassessing their viewpoint of theatre in education.

With this strong suggestion of theatre's impact on individuals, and on organizational viewpoint, theatre may truely offer a unique perspective about the future and organizations. Theatre can promote an experiential concept of change on which individuals can function, as well as suggesting some of the human conditions and limits for future human organizations.

For those of us involved in educational theatre, this organizational perspective need not jam our creativity or turn off the magic. We cannot justify an existence by producing quantities in the name of career education. Cultural education could soon be a luxury beyond apparent budget capacities. However, Warren Bennis' observation that

> "Expensive and time-consuming as it is, building a synergetic and collaborative frameworks will become essential." (12)

warns business and government that the individual prepared for changing organizations may have to be a justification. Theatre may be able to save time and money. Alvin Toffler's mention of theatre as an illustration of an "action based group" in LEARNING FOR TOMORROW: THE ROLE OF THE FUTURE IN EDUCATION, (13) suggests an intuitive sense about theatre organization. By doing what we have been doing, with a focus on organizational experience, we are already providing one of the most important forms of education needed in the future.

For organizational specialists and other social scientists, a new perspective about theatre as organization can provide a new source for information about humans in future human organizations. Alternatives for the change organization of the Nazi bureaucracy, described by Bruno Bettelheim in THE INFORMED HEART, (14) must be found. A constant changing of the pieces of the bureaucratic structure will not change, and may increase, that organization's rigidity. Such changes can lead individuals and organizations into future shock. A change of perspective can provide a new capacity for solving organizational problems. Since management training often includes role-playing, simulation games, and game theory, a new perspective of theatre should not be too difficult for business and government. In an economy in which sixty-five percent of the work force is involved in service industries, maintaining manufacturing assumptions of organization and performance seems risky. No alternative -- even theatre -- can be assumed to be of no value.

Bridges between the arts and the worlds of business and government must be built. We must communicate under the threat of future shock in a future of increasing change. Business and government cannot afford

to assume that the "play" of theatre renders theatre frivolous. Government, education leaders in particular, cannot afford to assume that theatre is merely a frill. Theatre cannot afford to assume the hubris of cultural snobbishness. Goals are a future business. We must form goals which also involve an organization of the future. Without communication in a common perspective, goals may be formed which cannot be met.

APPENDIX

PILOT STUDY OF INITIAL REPORT ON CHANGE EFFECTS OF EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES

By Dr. Robert Bauer

When first appraoched by Mr. C. H. Swanson, the concepts developed in this paper appeared to warrant a pilot study. Therefore, this Appendix is a brief report of a pilot study which has shown itself promising enough to need a more well-planned and detailed study. A cursory search of the theatre, educational, and psychological literature revealed no research in the area of individual (or group) change attributed to participation in the theatre. Of course, there is a volumious literature concerning individual change attributable to sensitivity training, T-groups, psychodrama, skills training, education, etc., but nothing related to participation in the theatre.

The basic test selected for this project was the Test of Behavioral Rigidity. The developer of the Test Behavioral Rigidity, K. W. Schaie, Ph. D., states,

> "One of the purposes of the present research edition is to facilitate investigations which may tie down some of the behavioral correlates of the TBR measures. Logical analysis of the experimental operations suggests the following description of the likely meaning of TBR factor scores.
>
> The 'Motor-cognitive rigidity' score indicates the individual's ability to shift without difficulty from one activity to another. It is a measure of effective adjustment to shift in familiar patterns and to continuously changing situational demands.
>
> The 'Personality-perceptual rigidity' score seeks to indicate the individual's ability to adjust readily to new surroundings and change in cognitive and environmental patterns. It seems to be a measure of the ability to perceive and adjust to new and unfamiliar patterns and interpersonal situations.

The 'Psychomotor speed' score indicates the individual's rate of emission of familiar cognitive responses. A high score would seem to imply superior functional efficency in coping with familiar situations requiring rapid response and quick thinking.

Since all three factors are expressed in standard score form, their composite may be obtained simply by adding and dividing by three. This composite score may be interpreted as a general estimate of the individual flexibility.

The mean scaled scores may be interpreted by stating that that an individual as compared to the norm group may be classified:

If his score is	69 or below	as very rigid
	70 to 79	as rigid
	80 to 89	as moderately rigid
	90 to 109	as average
	110 to 119	as moderately flexible
	120 to 129	as flexible
	130 or above	as very flexible" (12)

Two other tests were administered with the TBR to form a battery. These other tests were the California Personality Inventory by H. G. Gough, and The Group Personality Projective Test by R. N. Cassell and T. C. Kahn. Initial analyses of the performances on these tests are not yet available.

Because of the small number of subjects a statistical presentation is not made; although the data on the TBR does support the following descriptive information. Table I summarizes the findings.

At the beginning of the study all groups were statistically equal to each other on the pre-test. On the post-test, the math and psychology students increased in rigidity. The drama students decreased in rigidity. One explanation of this change is attributable to theatre participation.

These findings suggest the preparation of a sound methodological design in the near future to determine the validity of participation.

It may very well be that participation in theatre may be more useful than any of us has realized. Theatre's ~~efficiency~~ effectiveness can be demonstrated, for those who need (demand) it, in an objective manner.

TABLE I

PERFORMANCE OF THREE DIFFERENT CLASSES ON THE TEST OF BEHAVIORAL RIGIDITY

Psychology

	Motor-Cognitive		Personality-Perceptual		Psychomotor Speed		Composite	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
Mean Scaled Score	96	93	94	70	107	107	103	86
N	23	3	22	3	23	3	22	3

Drama

Mean Scaled Score	102	104	100	100	115	125	103	112
N	9	2	9	2	9	2	9	2

Math

Mean Scaled Score	94	93	90	87	102	100	98	90
N	7	3	7	3	7	3	7	3

FOOTNOTES

1. Toffler, Alvin: FUTURE SHOCK. (N.Y.: Bantam Books, 1971), p 359.
2. Ibid, p. 359.
3. cf.: Steiner, Gary A. (ed): THE CREATIVE ORGANIZATION. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971).
4. THE AGE OF DISCONTINNITY. (N.Y.: Harper & Row, 1969), p 193.
5. CENTER REPORT: for the Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions December, 1974. pp 19-21.
6. Op. Cit., P 126.
7. Kuhn, Thomas S.: THE STRUCTURES OF SCIENTIFIC REVOLUTIONS. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971), p 23.
8. "Organizations of the Future," PERSONNEL ADMINISTRATION, (September -October, 1967).
9. Maslow, Abraham: EUPSYCHIAN MANAGEMENT (Homewood, IL: Dorsey Press, 1965). p 88.
10. Schaie, K. Warner: "Test of Behavioral Rigidity," (Palo Alto, CA: Consulting Psychologists Press, 1960), p. 3.
11. Rivlin, Alice M.: SYSTEMATIC THINKING FOR SOCIAL ACTION. (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 1971), p 49.
12. Op. Cit. P
13. cf. Alvin Toffler: LEARNING FOR TOMORROW: The Role of the Future in Education. (N.Y.: Random House, 1974), esp. chapter 1.
14. cf. Bettelheim, Bruno: THE INFORMED HEART. (N.Y.: Avon, 1971).